OF PVBLIQVE REFORMATION OF A CHVRCH.

Of this Reformation we are to know

- **What it is.** This reformation is a bringing of men back vnto God, by putting away euil, and by renewing the performance of all holy duties decayed, eſpecially in the publique ſocieties of Gods children. 2. Chron 19.4, 2.Chron.34.35.2.King.18.4. 23.4.20.2.Kings 23.21.2.Chron.29 3,25.30.30.per totum.31.2.ad finem.
- **2 The neceſſitie of it, which may appeare**
  - 1 By the commaundement of the Lord, not only exacting of euery ſee man repentance (whereof this is a moſt ſolemne kinde) but alſo geuing charge for this matter, Jer.7.23,24,1.King.18,36 Pſalme 2.
  - 2 By the extraordinarie miniſterie of Prophets, and other perſons whom God ſo often rayſed vp, taught, and aſſiſted extraordinarilie, that they might be his inſtruments to bring men again to God and to reforme things amiſſe. Which extraordinarie worke of the Lord, done for the reformation of his Church, declareth the neceſſitie of it.
  - 3 By the fearefull plagues which God hath brought vpon the neglectors of reformation. Eli, becauſe he reclaimed not his ſonnes, and ſo the people which for the great iniquitie of the young men abhorred the offering of the Lord, loſt the Prieſthoode, and brake his necke. The young men alſo periſhed in a great ſlaughter of the people.1.Sam.2.&4. Joaſh and his people, becauſe they would not obey the word of the Lord in the mouth of Zachariah, to reforme that which was amiſſe, were forſaken of the Lord, and deliuered into the hands of their enemies.2.Chron.24.20.25 For this cauſe the people of Amaziah fell before Joaſh, Jeruſalem was ſacked, the king himſelfe taken priſoner, and afterward ſlaine by treaſon.2.Chron.25.16.23.24.27.
- **3 The parts of this reformation, which are**
  - 1 Suppreſſing of euery idolatrous, ſuperſtitious, filthy and ſtrange thing, doctrine, office, vſe, or ceremonie remayning. Wherin heede muſt be taken, that no remnant of the aforeſaid be ſuffered to continue, becauſe ſuch remnants prouoke God to anger, and were alwaies hurtfull to the Church. Judg.8,27.2.Chron.20,33.
  - 2 Conforming and reducing of the whole ſtate of the Church, that is to ſay, of the doctrine, officers, forme of gouernment, order &c. of it, to their auntient integritie: that is, to the preſcription of the word, or of Chriſt and his Apoſtles, wherby the Church was firſt eſtabliſhed. See the 5.point. 2.Kings 23.24.2.Chro.29.25.
- **4 The perſons who are to work this reformation, which are theſe,**
  - 1 The author & efficient cauſe of reformation is God himſelfe, Eſai 62.7. who if he turne not the hearts of men to obey his ſeruants perſwading to reformation, it is becauſe hee mindeth to deſtroy them. 2.Chron.25,16,20,1.Sam.2.25.Pro. 21,12.
  - 2 The inſtruments which yͤ Lord hath ſanctified for this worke, theſe are
    - 1 The prince whoſe dutie is
      - 1 To call and compell both miniſters and people to returne to the ordinances of the Lord, ſet down in his word 2.Kings 23,2.Chron.29.4.5,15.
      - 2 To be himſelfe formoſt in the practiſe of publique actions of godlines, that his example may ſtirre vp and ſtrengthen other. 2.Sam.6,2.5.15.16,2.Kings 23.2.3
      - 3 To make lawes for the continuance of reformation. 2.Chron.15,13.
    - 2 The miniſters, to whom it belongs
      - 1 To pray earneſtly and contenually vnto the Lord, for the ſetting vp and reforming of his Church. Eſay.62.7
      - 2 To make knowen the word of God in that behalfe to the Prince and people.2.Kings 22.8.Exod.4.14.& 5.1.
      - 3 To ioyne with the people, and to goe before them in all their ſuites to them in authoritie, for reformation. Eſay.62.10.Exod.4.& 5.
  - 3 So many of the people, eſpecially of the Elders, & know the will of God, to whom it belongeth not onely to ioyne in prayer to God for the good of his people. Heſt.4.16. but alſo in prayer and godlines to ioyne in this ſuit with the miniſters, 1.Kings 18.30.Exod.3.18. and at the Princes commaundement to deface the monuments of idolatrie. 2.Kin.11.18,10,27.
- **5 The rule and ſquare whereby the ſeruantes of yͤ Lord muſt performe this reformation, which is the word onely, of which we are to obſerue**
  - 1 The reaſons why the word is to be vſed for yͤ only rule of reformation, which are
    - Firſt, ſeeing to reforme a church is nothing els but the renewing of the firſt building and beautie of it, and by the word only it was firſt built vp & beautified, therfore by it alſo it muſt be reformed.
    - Secondly, foraſmuch as the redreſſing of euery mans ſeuerall wayes is to be performed by the word. Pſal.119, a whole church cannot otherwiſe be reformed.
    - Thirdly, ſith the Lord reproouing the vngodly for hating reformation, verifieth it hereby, becauſe they caſt his lawes behind their backs, Pſal.50. it cannot be auoyded but the reformation of a church is to be deriued from the word.
    - 4 By the examples of ſuch as at the commandement of God, haue either accompliſhed or laboured any ſuch reformation, who alwayes haue brought and called men to the rules of the word of God.2.Kings 23.2.3.Nehem.8.1.2.3.4.Nehem.10.29.Gal 6.16.Reuel 3.3
  - 2 The manner how to vſe this rule aright, when men are to obſerue yͤ in
    - Aboliſhing things, they muſt iudge by the word, whats idolatrous, what ſuperſtitious, what ſtrange or crept in without warrant from the Lord, &c. and ſo to aboliſh them.
    - Conforming, if it be
      - In matters of diſcipline,
        - 1 Where expreſſe commandemintes of Chriſt, and examples of the churches are found.
          - 1 They muſt carefully marke of theſe commaundements and examples, which are temporall and extraordinarie, which otherwiſe,
          - 2 They muſt embrace and ſtabliſh, without gaineſaying and conditions, that which is ordinarie, not onely as the beſt, but as the onely true and allowed ordinances of the Lord, leauing the extraordinarie things to the Lord, in whoſe only power it is to breake the ordinarie rules of his word.
        - 2 Where expreſſe direction is not found, as in ſome matters of order, and other circumſtances, they muſt take heed that they admitte nothing which is contrarie to the generall rules of order, comlines, and edification ſet down in the word.
      - In doctrine likewiſe, where expreſſe and laſting rules are found, they muſt receiue them as the vndoubted Oracles of God: where any thing is in queſtion that hath not ſuch plaine teſtimonies, they muſt order and determine euery matter by the analogie of faith.
- **6 The aduerſarie endeuors againſt it: where we are to note the wilines of Sathan, which hath a ſeuerall charme to bring a ſleep if it may be, euery one yͤ hath any hand in the worke, as for the**
  - 1 Prince, he putteth into his head by flattering courtiers, &c.
    - 1 That theſe ſeekers of reformation entend to ſtrengthen themſelues, that they may the better rebell againſt him. Nehem.2.9. where as the ende of reformation is, that no diſobedient perſon may be ſuffered. Rom.13.1. and reformation hath neuer ſuffered men to rebell againſt the enemies of it, how much leſſe wil it againſt the friends?
    - 2 That ſuch exquiſite reformation wil make idle pacts, and withdraw the people from following their vocations. Exod,5.4, whereas contrariwiſe, reformation cannot away with any that walke inordinately.2.Theſſ 3.6.
    - 3 That it is the honor of Princes not to correct the doings of their godly anceſtors, 1 Kings 12.14. whereas the godly kings are commended for reforming not onely that which their wicked anceſtors brought in, but alſo which their godly predeceſſors left vnreformed.2.Chron.35.18.30.5.2.King.18.4.
    - 4 That ſuch Reformation wil be more troubleſome then commodious, which declareth that theſe politiques are poſſeſſed with a lying ſpirite, for how know they that the Lord will not geue a bleſſing of peace to his owne ordinance.2.Chron.15.7. Againe, what deuill taught them that greater trouble then commoditie would be in ſeruing God, as though the abandoning of euill made not the troubles ſuſteyned therein, great commodities and bleſſings to him that ſuffered them.
  - 2 Miniſters he moueth tyrantes to draw them back,
    - 1 By accuſing them to be peſtilent and ſeditious fellowes, and mainteyners of ſectes. Actes 24.5. Heretiques. Actes 24.14. contentious perſons. Jerem.15.10. troublers of the ſtate.1.Kings 18.17.
    - 2 By impriſoning them. Jerem 20.2. and threatning them with death except they ceaſe Exod.10.28.2.Chron 25.16. Jere.11.21. yea many times ſlaying ſome of them to terrifie other from following the worke of the Lord.
    - 3 By cauſing their frends to forſake them. Tit.4.10.16.
    - All theſe things being promoters of the miniſters bleſſednes. Mat.5. ought to make them more bold and forwarde in the worke. Actes 9.21. Actes 13.45.46. Philip.1.14. knowing that the Lord will aſſiſt them. Tit.4.17.
  - 3 The people whom he ſeeketh to hinder alſo
    - 1 By vpbrayding them with lack of learning and knowledge. John 7.49.
    - 2 By cauſing tyrants to oppreſſe them by all vngodly meanes. Exod 5.6.7.8.
    - 3 By ſending out falſe teachers to withdraw them.
    - Againſt all which the people muſt arme themſelues with knowledge and patience, not forſaking the worke of the Lord for any thing.
- **7 The ſolemnitie & manner of receiuing this reformation, (after the hinderances thereof ouercome) whereof we are to know,**
  - 1 The points & ſeuerall degrees of this ſolemnitie, which are
    - 1 A gathering together of all the ſtates of that place where the reformation is to be made. 2.Kings 23,1,2.Nehe.8,1.
    - 2 A faithfull laying open of the word by preaching in the eares of them all, that they may ſee where reformation wanteth. 2.Chron.34.30.Nehem.8.4.8.
    - 3 Solemne prayer, with prayſing of God for his goodnes in vouchſafing them a ſight of their wants, and a way to reforme them, with humble confeſſion of their former rebellions, diſobediences, and backſlidings. Nehem.8.6.to the end.
    - 4 A ſolemne couenant to be made with God by the whole ſtate. 2.Kings 11.17.2 Chron.15.14.15. In which couenant they promiſe hence forwarde to forſake all their own wayes and inuentions, and to cleaue to the commandements of God alone. Unto this promiſe was adioyned an oath, and a curſe or deſire of vengeance to come vpon themſelues, if they forſake the wayes of the Lord for any other 2.Kings 11.17.Nehem.10,29.
  - 2 The reaſons why ſuch maner of receiuing this reformation is needfull, which are,
    - 1 Becauſe in a publique deformation of the Church the couenant of our peace is generally broken: wherefore it behoueth vs in returning and reforming our ſelues, to renewe the ſame couenant, as generally, and that in as ſolemne maner as may be, ſeeing we are to deale, not with earth and aſhes, but with the God of infinite maieſtie, with whom to deale in light and diſſolute manner, eſpecially in ſuch a worke, were great ſinne.
    - 2 Becauſe of the commandement of the Lord, who in a publique rebellion of Prince and people, chargeth them which are in authoritie with their people, not only to receiue inſtruction, to reioyce before the Lord in trembling, &c. but moreouer requireth of them and theirs, a ſolemne couenant, and the outward teſtimonie of it, if they wil auoyde the anger of God. Pſalme 2.
- **8 The fruites & bleſſinges which folow the receuers & workers of this reformation. the Lord al wais geueth a reward vnto it 2.Chron. 15.7. For he**
  - 1 Heareth the voice of ſuch, and their prayer commeth vp into heauen, to his holy habitation. 2.Chron.30.27.
  - 2 Forgeueth their former tranſgreſſions, and though they were as red as crimſen, or ſcarlet, he maketh them as white as ſnow or wooll. Eſay.1.18,19.
  - 3 Cauſeth them to dwell in their own land, and not to remoue. Jerem.4.1.7.3.
  - 4 Maketh them to eate the good of the land. Eſay 1.19.62.89. yea he openeth the windowes of heauen, and powreth down vpon them the bleſſings of the earth in aboundance. Malach.3.10.
  - 5 Geueth them reſt and quietnes from their enemies.2.Kings 11.20.2. Chron.14.5.15. 15.19.20.30. Eſay 31.7.8.9.
  - 6 Geueth them ſtrange victories, and mighty great ſpoyles of their enemies.2.Chron.14.12 15.15.2.20.14.23.
  - 7 Maketh them to rule ouer many nations, & ſuffereth not other to raign ouer thē. Deu.15.6.
  - 8 Maketh al things to proſper that they take in hand. 2.Kings 18.7
  - 9 Geueth tot hat Prince honor & riches in aboundance, eſtabliſhing the kingdome in his hand 2.Chron.17.5
  - Theſe and infinite bleſſinges follow this Reformation, wherefore they that wilfully withſtande it euidently declare, that they ſeeke not the wealth, peace, plentie, godly preheminence, and flouriſhing eſtate of their Prince and Countrey.

FINIS.